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Carr as Thucydides' ghostwriter: the paradox of realism and a moral foreign policy

Abstract

The subject of this paper is to examine the role of morality in foreign policy decision making and action, while its goal is to argue that (1) morality plays an important role in the creation of foreign policy, and (2) that it is not possible to formulate a credible and intelligible foreign policy decision without moral considerations. In order to argue this point the author relies on the theoretical framework set by Edward Hallet Carr in his groundbreaking book *The Twenty Years Crisis* (1946), and reinforce his conclusions with an examination of one of the pivotal passages of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the famous Funeral Oration delivered by the Athenian statesman Pericles. In conclusion, the author claims that even in international relations are completely amoral, as they are in the realist account, that foreign policy cannot be, due to the inability of formulating foreign policy without moral considerations.

Key words: morality, national interest, foreign policy, Carr, realism, Thucydides, funeral oration

Introduction

The practice of both domestic and foreign politics is commonly regarded as a Machiavellian enterprise, in which moral rules, outcomes, or moral sentiment play either an insignificant role, or are potentially considered dangerous for politicians and the people they represent. Even when moral reasons are used to justify a certain decision or action, a Machiavellian would argue that they should be used only as a veneer, in order to obscure the true reasons of political action (Strauss 1972; Machiavelli, 2005; King, 2007; Nederman, 2009). Therefore, the subject of this paper is to examine the role of morality in foreign policy decision making and action, while its goal is to argue that (1) morality plays an important role in the creation of foreign policy, and (2) that it is not possible to formulate a credible and intelligible foreign policy decision

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without moral considerations. In order to argue this point we will rely on the theoretical framework set by Edward Hallett Carr in his groundbreaking book *The Twenty Years Crisis* (1946), and reinforce his conclusions with an examination of one of the pivotal passages of Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, the famous Funeral Oration delivered by the Athenian statesman Pericles. Prior to this however, we offer an overview of possibilities for the relationship between one of realism's central concepts – the national interest – and morality. In conclusion, it is claimed that even if international relations are completely amoral, as they are in the realist account, that foreign policy cannot be, due to the inability of formulating foreign policies without moral considerations.

National interests and morality – possible modalities within their relationship

In his article *Morality and "the National Interest"* David Welch (2000) identifies a minimum of four positions that have evolved through the history of international relations on the question of this relationship.

On the first position morality and the national interest represent "fundamentally different imperatives," meaning that whenever morality exerts an influence on foreign policy or provides a base for foreign policy, the national interest is excluded from doing the same. The process, of course, goes both ways. If circumstances should allow for them to coexist in any foreign policy decision, there is still no necessary connection between them, and their coexistence is entirely fortuitous. National interests are, of course, the primary concern.

The second position is quite different, and says there is absolutely no tension between morality and the national interest. What is in the national interest is by the fact itself the moral thing to do. But not all moral actions have to be in the national interest. Namely, the concept of national interest is the moral concept that outweighs all other moral concepts in international relations and foreign policy, making it the primary moral duty of the statesman to uphold it.

The third view states that morality and national interests are simply different ways of considering international relations. The former is concerned with what is right or wrong, while the latter examines what is advantageous and disadvantageous. But, just as it has become popular to claim about the relationship between morality and profit in business ethics, proponents of the third view say that morality and national interests "empirically coincide," meaning that the best way to look out for a state's national interests in the long run is by making morally right decisions.

The fourth view says that the concept of the national interest does have a moral content, but that foreign policy based in that concept will, more or less frequently, "fail

the test of morality.” This is quite different from the second view, because it admits both that national interests are intertwined with moral interests and have a moral content, and can still lead to immoral actions. Though such occasions may be considered tragic, it is still the duty of the statesman to see the tragedy through by setting his personal moral feelings aside and ensuring the security and survival of the state. On the second view, there would have been no moral dilemma. Any decision rooted in the national interest would have been *a priori* viewed as the morally right decision. In other words, the difference between the second and fourth view is that while the second sees the morality of a given situation as merely ephemeral to what is really the case, the fourth view allows moral considerations to have a real effect on foreign policy decisions, even if they cannot outweigh the importance of national interests.

The question remains, though, is there any practical difference to the application of these four different approaches to foreign policy decisions. It seems that regardless of how they view the relationship between morality and national interests, they recommend actions in accordance with the latter, except for the third view, which would actually advocate a moral point of view. But another important question remains unanswered. What is “the national interest?” For one thing, when we “[...] speak of the national interest, we almost always mean the common good of the members of political communities organized as sovereign states [...]” (Welch, 2000: 7). But what constitutes this common good, and thus, what really constitutes states’ national interests? Well, as Welch continues to explain, the term itself “denotes at the very least the survival of the state.” But, while “[...] this may be a national interest, however, it does not seem to be an adequate understanding of the national interest” (*ibid*: 8). This is because the very survival of a state is rarely endangered. This, in turn, means that the concept can be stretched to denote whatever a particular politician or theorist wants it to denote at a given moment. It could thus denote the amount of money a state has, or its international reputation, or the self-respect that the citizens of that state have because they are morally comfortable with its foreign policy. So while a minimal definition of the national interest as survival is generally accepted it does not seem to provide anyone with clear guidelines on how to actually make foreign policy decisions. How does one decide what the national interest is when one needs to make a foreign policy decision that (hard as it may be) doesn’t directly threaten the survival of the state. Obviously, at that point the national interest is what anyone decides it is, whether it be financial stability, international reputation, or even the moral reputation of the state. Welch addresses this as the problem of “indeterminate policy guidance” (*ibid*). Secondly, foreign policy decisions are rarely or never in the interest of the entire citizenry of a state. Thirdly, the term ‘national interest’ itself can easily be used to mask which particular values politicians want to promote or sacrifice. It can therefore be easily used as a

moral standard which, while not inconceivable, seems rather hypocritical. Fourthly, and perhaps most importantly,

[...] the phrase is superfluous. We can always do without it. We can describe the stakes, goals, and values implicated in any foreign policy choice in plain language, and we can do so in a way that is more precise and more helpful than if we subsume them all under the rubric of a single generic term. At no point in the description, explanation, prediction, or advocacy of foreign policy do we need to invoke "the national interest," and never do we gain by doing so (*ibid*: 9).

As much as there may be reasons for actually abandoning the concept itself, the national interest is not likely to stop being a common and important part of the language of international politics and foreign policy. What is important though, is that the explanation that morality is not "fit" for international relations and foreign policy because it is not in accord with the national interests of states has been contested for two reasons: (1) it is not clear what the concept of national interest(s) definitively is, except if we take a minimal view of it, in which case it becomes useless for most foreign policy decision making processes; (2) regardless of which of the four realist views offered on the relationship between morality and national interests we may choose to believe, none of them prove that the exclusion of moral judgment from foreign policy is necessary or even in the national interest.

In the following part of the paper, we will show E. H. Carr's arguments, in order to show that regardless of the realist's amoral description of power relations in international politics, foreign policies cannot be formulated without moral considerations.

E. H. Carr and the ineffectiveness of realism

Edward Hallett Carr is best known for his comprehensive critique of Western diplomacy in the early 20th century, and the framework he creates in this critique has strong realist characteristics (Griffits et al., 2009: 9). In his most famous book *The Twenty Years Crisis* he attacks the idealist position, which he refers to as "utopianism." While Thucydides provided us with the first ever recorded realist-idealist debate in his *Melian Dialogue*, Carr gave perhaps the first comprehensive account of the idealist position itself, thus providing the framework for the entire debate. The idealist position is thus characterized by its faith in human reason, its confidence in progress, a sense of moral rectitude, and finally by a belief in the underlying harmony of state's interests (Korab-Karpowicz, 2010). This means that the idealist believes that people are reasonable and rational actors, and based on their reason they are able to identify their interests as harmonious. More to that, people are able to do this across state borders, which in turn means that states have common interests, and state behavior can be reasonable enough to achieve those interests in a peaceful way. Instead of increasing their power,

and “ruling wherever they can,” states can take care of their survival through institutionalized forms of collective security. Carr was of course highly skeptical of both the idea of collective security and of the institutions that were designed to see to its implementation, such as the League of Nations. His concern was that the idea was based “[...] on the erroneous assumption that the territorial and political status quo was satisfactory to all the major powers in the international system” (Griffits et al., 2009: 10). This also shows that the idealist’s belief about the underlying harmony of interests among states is misconceived. It means that conflicts among states are not based merely in the institutional and bureaucratic failure to facilitate good communication among states and bring about an understanding of their common interests. Conflicts are the direct result of the imbalance of power in the international system. Furthermore, it means that such conflict cannot be resolved by appealing to universal moral principles, but by negotiating for a more balanced structure of power.

Whether or not Carr’s critique of idealist thinking is completely accurate is beside the point at this moment. What matters is that regardless of his critique, Carr’s approach is far more nuanced than the paradigmatic, full-bodied approach to realism that we mentioned before (Molloy, 2006: 51). “Delving into the works of Carr, one becomes more aware of the inadequacy of textbook definitions of Realism when compared to the complex theory presented by Carr in *The Twenty Years’ Crisis* [...]” (*ibid*: 52). At times it even seems that the only thing invariably linking him to the realist camp is his insistence on power as the primary driver of international relations. Carr did not believe that a prudent foreign policy, or a prudent politician for that matter, can forsake all moral considerations from his decision-making processes and behavior. This especially applies to conflicts and crises since these were the central problems that he was trying to address.

Carr suggests that the idealist approach, or as he calls it, the “utopian” approach to international relations, is immature. However, he holds that in its pure form, realism is completely sterile. While he contends that the first task of any political thinker is to expose the immature nature of idealist principles, he believes that pure realism, what we called full-bodied realism, cannot offer a final solution to the issues or international relations and international conflicts. In one of the most illuminating paragraphs of the entire *Twenty Years’ Crisis* he writes (1946: 89):

The impossibility of being a consistent and thorough-going realist is one of the most certain and most curious lessons of political science. Consistent realism excludes four things which appear to be essential ingredients of all effective political thinking: a finite goal, an emotional appeal, a right of moral judgment and a ground for action.

What is then, the importance of these ingredients of all political thinking? To start with the first, politics must have a finite goal. Carr contends that there is no pure

realist premise from which a finite political goal can be deduced. This means that one cannot create or even hope to create a political program based on pure realist thinking, and that in turn means that one cannot formulate a coherent foreign policy. He remarks that Machiavelli's biggest problem was not in the immorality of the methods he proposed, but in the lack of content of the state, which exists merely to exist (*ibid*). This point goes a long way in emphasizing an issue that was addressed earlier in this paper. It is the issue of the importance of the survival of the state. A pure realist considers the survival of the state to be of axiomatic importance and would never ask why it is so important, because the answer cannot be attained by pure realist reasoning. However, both Carr and Machiavelli omit one drastically important point -- we do not merely lie to each other about our moral virtues and reasons for action, we lie to ourselves as well. For the wicked, the veneer of morality is not only external, but internal as well. As *Game of Thrones* character Edmure Tully (ET) put it to Jamie Lannister (JL), a politically and morally corrupt character (Mylod, 2016):

ET: You understand on some level; you understand that you're an evil man.

JL: I'll leave the judgments to the gods.

ET: Well, it's convenient for you. Hm... You are a fine looking fellow - your square jaw, your golden armor. Tell me, I want to know, I truly do, how do you live with yourself? All of us have to believe that we're decent, don't we? We have to sleep at night. How do you tell yourself that you're decent, after everything that you've done?

Second, these finite goals must be of such a character that they can create an emotional appeal. For instance, a finite goal like winning a war and committing one's resources to attaining that goal will not bear fruit unless an emotional appeal can be made to the public to which this goal applies. Ultimately, the cited passage from *Game of Thrones* applies here as well, because even if one considered international politics to be an amoral enterprise, they still need to consider themselves as "decent" and moral.

Third, and perhaps most important to this paper, politics must include the right of moral judgment. In other words, moral judgment must not be excluded from the processes of political and especially foreign policy decision making. Therefore, the old realist creed that might is right must be abandoned. Carr's argument in support of this opinion is the following (1946: 91-92):

The belief that whatever succeeds is right, and has only to be understood to be approved, must, if consistently held, empty thought of purpose, and thereby sterilize it and ultimately destroy it. [...] The necessity, recognized by all politicians, both in domestic and in international affairs, for cloaking interests in a guise of moral principles is in itself a symptom of the inadequacy of realism.

What Carr is trying to say here is that maintaining the belief that moral judgment can have no place in foreign affairs and international relations is both purposeless

and hypocritical. Even if politicians use moral principles only to disguise their true intentions, they still use them, proving that a pure realist foreign policy is impossible to maintain.

Fourth, political thought or any theory that guides a political decision maker, must provide concrete grounds for political action. Realism in international relations does not provide us with such grounds. One might say that the theoretical realist is like a non-interventionist divinity. Based on what he thinks of a state's status on the international stage, and the interests he attributes to all states, Carr says, the realist can establish a perfect chain of cause and effect and give a "scientific prediction" of what will follow (*ibid*: 92). Because of this the realist is completely devoid of purpose¹ and thus cannot provide decision making processes and state behavior with any concrete grounds for action. This is another important point for this paper because it correlates very well to the aforementioned problem of the concept of national interests stated by David Welch. Namely, it only provides us with very "indeterminate policy guidance" (Welch, 2000: 3).

Carr's conclusion is that "utopianism" is useless because it only provides a disguise for the interests of the privileged, and it is the duty of every realist to expose it for what it truly represents. Moral values are only introduced into the international arena, Carr believes, once power is consolidated by a certain number of states, and it is those states that appeal to morality in order to help preserve the *status quo*. However, pure realism itself provides one with a never-ending struggle for power which makes the peaceful coexistence of peoples impossible. Therefore, a sound policy can only be one that is successful in finding the balance between the idealist and realist principles (Carr, 1946: 94). The same can be better described as the balance between ideas and institutions. Whereas political ideas are a highly utopian element filled with moral meaning, political institutions tend to embrace more realist philosophies in their behavior. This is so because one side emphasizes morality while the other emphasizes power, and it is precisely the balance between morality and power that is so important for the statesman to discover and rediscover every step of the way. However, since we cannot moralize power and we cannot expel power from politics we are left with a dilemma that cannot be completely resolved. As Carr puts it, the ideal can never be institutionalized and the institutions can never be idealized (*ibid*: 100).

The gravity of the situation is most obvious when it comes to military power and war. Carr regards military power to be of supreme importance, because the ultimate resort of all unsettled political disputes is war. So, potential war is the dominant factor in international politics (*ibid*: 109). This line of reasoning leads Carr to an astonishing

¹ ... and it is statesmen that tend to see themselves as „burdened with glorious purpose.“ as the character of Look in: Whedon, J. 2012. Avengers. Marvel.

(or not so astonishing) conclusion about foreign policy and war. Namely, that foreign policy neither can nor should ever be separated from strategy. Military power thus becomes not merely an instrument of the state but an end in itself, and because military power, or at least the status of being a military power, is mostly attained by the waging of war itself, wars of limited objective have become almost impossible to wage in modern conditions (*ibid*: 111). Does this mean that war and other phenomena associated with international relations cannot be judged by any moral standards? Does it mean that state behavior cannot be assessed on a moral, as well as on a legal and strategic basis? And if the function of morality is simply to help maintain the *status quo*, should it not be expelled from international relations and foreign policy?

It seems that Carr's answer to all of these questions is negative, regardless of the fact that he is commonly regarded as a realist. Namely, he regards the claim that states can and should act morally as a hypothesis, and he provides proof in favor of the hypothesis by saying: "So long as statesmen, and others who influence the conduct of international affairs, agree in thinking that the state has [moral] duties, and allow this view to guide their action, the hypothesis remains effective" (*ibid*: 152). Morality can play an important role in international relations not because it should but simply because it does. So when the realist contends that morality does not play a role in international relations he is wrong; it does play a role even if it does so only in the manner of a self-fulfilling prophecy – it plays a role because we believe or want it to play a role, while in foreign policy it remains important because we cannot formulate a foreign policy without it. The idealist or "utopian" on the other hand, believes that states are both domestically and internationally subjected to the same moral obligations, and thus the same moral considerations as individuals. This, Carr believes, is also not possible, and again it is because we generally do not believe it to be possible. Philosophers often wish to prove a point conclusively, but when it comes to politics, especially international politics, it seems that the measure of truth is quite relative. In fact, it is so relative that it rests contently in the hands of politicians and ordinary people. So, if a philosopher's beliefs, whether they are those of a realist or those of an idealist, cannot be accepted, or do not correspond to the public opinion, they are most probably false. "The fact is that most people, while believing that states ought to act morally, do not expect from them the same kind of moral behavior, which they expect from themselves and one another" (*ibid*: 156). So, there is a binding international moral code because states, or the individuals within those states, believe in it. Any such code is of course minimal. For instance, while it is morally praiseworthy of individuals to help others even at the expense of their own safety, it is not commonly expected of states to "[...] indulge in altruism at the cost of any serious sacrifice of its interests. [...] The accepted standard of international morality in regard to the altruistic virtues appears to be that a state should indulge in them in so far as it is not seriously incompatible with

its more important interests” (*ibid*: 158–159). We should, however, remind ourselves, that Carr also tells us that those same interests cannot be properly formulated without the application of morality.

To conclude, Carr is a realist, yet he is not a realist in the sense in which he would claim that he has a theory that is able to explain everything that happens in international relations based on theoretical deduction from a set of principles. He is a realist in the sense that he is a political conservative, thus believing that utopian ideals cannot form the fabric of international politics, nor can they effectively inform the rules of military engagement. However, as a political conservative, he is also unable to accept the principles of realism in foreign, if those principles are left unchecked by conservative political prudence, which in turn occasionally involves moral considerations. Finally, he is a realist because he ultimately believes in the primacy of power over morality, and national interests over moral judgment, although he would never consider the exclusion of morality from foreign policy to be prudent.

Pericles and the importance of moral reasoning

In order to further the argument, we will invoke several passages from the author who is widely considered as the father of the entire realist tradition in international relations – Thucydides. So far, we have claimed

- that laws, if they are in power long enough, can and do create customs which in turn influence the moral values, practices, habits and feelings that are instrumental to the functioning of a society;
- that the main goal of states is survival, but that the state does have some content and purpose – it does not exist merely to exist.

A particular way of life that a people within a state have is mostly influenced by the customs and laws of that state. Thus, the conclusion can be drawn that fear for the survival of the state is, in fact, a moral reason for making foreign policy decisions. Nowhere is this sentiment better expressed than in the funeral oration delivered by Pericles (431 B. C. E.), one of the centerpieces of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*. “It has come down from antiquity in Thucydides’ version as one of the most eloquent of oratorical performances and a lasting expression of the Athenian civilization that it celebrates and memorializes” (Zagorin, 2005: 64).

After the first year of the war, a public funeral for the honored dead who had fallen in the first battles was organized in Athens. As was customary for public funerals a high dignitary was chosen to deliver an oration in honor of the fallen. On this occasion it was delivered by Pericles, the leader of the Athenian democracy, and was also used to justify the war effort and to homogenize the public in their approval of the Athenian war effort. So, when Pericles speaks of Athenian democracy, and the way of life that

was bequeathed to them by their ancestors, “[...] free to the present time by their valour [...],” (Thucydides, 2004: 82) he speaks of something that is worth preserving at any cost. When he mentions the honored dead, it is clear that they are honored because they chose “[...] to die resisting, rather than live submitting” (*ibid*: 85). It is because of a peoples’ belief in the inherent worth of their way of life that the survival of the state must be defended, even by acts of war and sacrifices of death. Sacrifice is a moral decision.

It is impossibly difficult to choose only one part of the oration as representative of all the sentiments Pericles expresses. Yet the belief that the Athenians had in the worth of their way of life and the character developed by living in an environment of democratic freedoms is well expressed in the following passage (Thucydides, 2008: 92–93):²

We cultivate beauty without extravagance, and intellect without loss of [vigor]; wealth is for us the gateway to action, not the subject of boastful talk, and while there is no disgrace in the admission of poverty, the real disgrace lies in the failure to take active measures to escape it; our politicians can combine management of their domestic affairs with state business, and others who have their own work to attend to can nevertheless acquire a good knowledge of politics. We are unique in the way we regard anyone who takes no part in public affairs: we do not call that a quiet life, we call it a useless life. [...] In summary I declare that our city as a whole is an education to Greece; and in each individual among us I see combined the personal self-sufficiency to enjoy the widest range of experience and the ability to adapt with consummate grace and ease. That this is no passing puff but factual reality is proved by the very power of the city: this character of ours built that power.

If anything is clear from this rather boastful passage, it is that the Athenians do not wish to part from their way of life, and their customs and laws because they consider them the best (possible) ones. However, even though the praise a Spartan statesman would sing in favor of his own state might rely on quite different qualities, as is true if we take the different qualities of states in any period in history, praise would nonetheless be sung. The Spartan feels that his way of life is superior, or sacred, or at least worthwhile and he does not wish to part with it. This is true for peoples in all states, at least if they are persuaded to feel so by illustrious speeches such as that of Pericles was. And because the survival of the state is inextricably connected to one’s way of life, in terms of laws and customs, peoples of all states are willing to defend the state’s survival with any means that policy may bequeath them with, even war. This is the message we can read out of Pericles’ funeral oration.

Pericles is attempting to move the crowd towards an important foreign policy decision – to commit more human and material resources into the war effort. Although

² A different translation of the *History* was used to extract the longer quoted passages because the translation seems more understandable to the modern reader.

a later part of the gives us a blatantly realist vision of Athenian action (the famous *Melian Dialogue*), Pericles' oration is everything but realist. In fact, it contains moral judgment, it is emotionally appealing, and it certainly gives grounds for action. Even if we look at the famous Melian Dialogue, a purely realist interpretation can hardly stand. Namely, the Athenians are portrayed as saying (Thucydides, 2008: 304):

We believe it of the gods, and we know it for sure of men, that under some permanent compulsion of nature wherever they can rule, they will. We did not make this law; it was already laid down, and we are not the first to follow it; we inherited it as a fact, and we shall pass it on as a fact to remain true for ever; and we follow it in the knowledge that you and anyone else given the same power as us would do the same.

However, the problem with Thucydides' point of view here, as Michael Walzer sees it, is that it is the point of view of a historian, not a historical actor, and it is from the perspective of the actor that the moral point of view derives its legitimacy (Walzer, 2006: 8). In fact, the point of view uttered by the Athenian generals seems to be overly abstract to be employed by actual historical actors, but rather sounds like the opinion of a historian and philosopher. The decision itself to destroy the population of Melos after it was conquered is merely given to us as a finished product, and portrayed in terms of necessity. However, Thucydides does not tell us anything about how the decision was brought in the Athenian assembly and how the argument for the destruction of the island ("the Melian decree") won the day (*ibid*). It is hard to believe that every single member of that assembly immediately took for granted any such arguments. Namely, the argument that invokes necessity could not have been taken with absolute certainty, like the falling of a stone with nothing to support it, but rather as an argument about the probabilities and risks of future action. And as Walzer himself put it, "[...] such arguments are always arguable. Would the destruction of Melos really reduce Athenian risks? Are there alternative policies? What are the likely costs of this one? Would it be right? What would other people think of Athens if it were carried out?" (*ibid*). Such arguments are certainly not won by necessity, but rather by debate, and such debate usually involves some kind of moral consideration, and there seems to be no contradiction between that view and the view of war being merely a continuation of policy, as we had Clausewitz put it in the beginning. Unfortunately, Thucydides does not tell us how the argument was won, but what has been said so far should be more than enough to conclude that the decision *was* actually debated, and that it was in no way predetermined by a "law of nature," making the debate itself a useless charade (*ibid*).

Conclusion

To conclude, if Carr's stance on the role of morality in foreign policy can stand any scrutiny, then the application of realist thinking to the description international politics, as one level of analysis, and to foreign policy as another, seems to present us with an interesting paradox. Namely, the realist description of power relations between states could be true, yet it would still be impossible to create foreign policy with complete disregard to moral considerations. This paradox (if it is, indeed, a paradox) is interesting because the aforementioned realist claim that "[...] there are no significant moral relationships between nations the way there are between people who live in a society [...]" (Fotion, 2000: 18) could be completely true, without making any difference to the influence of moral considerations on foreign policy. This, in turn, means that a foreign policy that is informed by moral considerations does not need to rely on an idealist view of international politics, and does not need to establish any sort of harmony of interests between states, or for that matter, any kind of *welt ethos*. One state may consider the actions and/or decisions of another as immoral, as the moral beliefs within their societies may differ; a realists description of the position of those two states within the power structure of international politics may be amoral; but foreign policy decisions within any given country will be based in (among others) moral considerations.

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Carr kao Tukididov "ghostwriter": paradoks realizma i moralna vanjska politika

Sažetak

Predmet teksta je uloga moralnih vrijednosti u vanjskopolićkom odlućivanju i djelovanju, a cilj je argumentirati da (1) moralne vrijednosti imaju važnu ulogu u stvaranju vanjskih politika te da (2) nije moguće formulirati vjerodostojnu i razumljivu vanjsku politiku bez moralnih razmatranja. Kako bi isto tvrdio autor se oslanja na teorijski okvir iz Dvadesetogodišnje krize (1946) Edward Hallet Carra, a svoje zaključke pojaćava istraživanjem jednog od najpoznatijih dijelova Tukididove Povijesti Peloponeskog rata, poznatog Periklova nekrologa. Zaključno autor tvrdi da čak i kad bi međunarodni odnosi bili potpuno amoralni, kao što su predstavljeni u realistićkoj teoriji međunarodnih odnosa, vanjska politika zbog nemogućnosti vlastite formulacije bez moralnih razmatranja, sama ne može biti amoralna.

Ključne rijeći: moralne vrijednosti, nacionalni interes, vanjska politika, Carr, realizam, Tukidid, nekrolog